

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
of
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
presents

EXPLORATIONS

Sunday, January 25, 1976 at 8:00 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Arts Building

SONATE a TROIS (c. 1730) Jean Marie Leclair "l'aine"
(1697-1764)

Adagio
Allegro
Sarabande
Allegro assai

Joan Pecover, flute
Robert Klakowich, harpsichord
Barbara Morris, cello

SIX STUDIES, OPUS 51 (1942) Hans Pfitzner
(1869-1949)

Nicht schnell
Kräftig elastisch
Gemächlich
Bewegt
Wuchtig
Langsam

Helmut Brauss, piano

INTERMISSION

TRIO FOR VIOLIN, HORN AND PIANO,
OPUS 44 (1956) Lennox Berkeley
(b. 1903)

Allegro
Lento
Theme and Variations

Lawrence Fisher, violin
Gloria Ratcliffe, French horn
Alexandra Munn, piano

MICHELANGELO LIEDER (1897) Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)

Wohl denk' ich oft
Alles endet, was entsteht
Fühlt meine Seele

Alan Ord, Bass-Baritone
Alfred Strombergs, piano

The next concert in this series: Sunday, March 7, 1976. The program will include a Selection of American Choral Music, Loeffler's "Pieces for Oboe, Viola and Piano" and Brahms' Quintet for Piano and Strings.

PROGRAM NOTES

Jean Marie Leclair "l'aine" (1697-1764), the son of a master lace maker at Lyons, possibly began his career as a dancer. Although he was active as a ballet master, he won brilliant success in Paris at the **Concert Spirituel** and at court from 1728-1736, as a composer and violinist. After 1736 he retired from concert life in order to devote himself to teaching and composing. Late one evening in 1764, close to his own door, he met death violently by assassination, and neither motive nor murderer were ever discovered, though it is possible that his wife was responsible.

Leclair, who in the words of Manfred Bukofzer was "the greatest French master of the solo and trio sonata," achieved a fusion of the distinctive French and Italian styles prevalent at the time. His five books of sonatas (written from 1723 onward) contain few programmatic hints, a common trait in the music of his French contemporaries, and adopt Italian tempo markings. He adhered to the late baroque sonata form, with rudimentary recapitulation of a single theme; and occasionally he tied movements together by means of similar thematic material. His music is "distinguished for the sustaining power of its long sequential phases, the graceful tenderness of its melodies, its rhythmic subtlety, and the fiery pathos of its harmonies. Leclair fused the outstanding virtues of the two national styles into an imaginative style of his own, unmatched either in French or in Italian music." (Bukofzer)

—Brian Gillingham

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Like Richard Strauss, the German composer Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949) was a contemporary of Hindemith, Bartok and Schoenberg. But while the music of the latter composers pointed in a revolutionary way toward the future, Pfitzner's composing was deeply rooted in the post-Wagnerian tradition which rejected the new expression, atonalism. But Pfitzner's contribution was not epigonal. Like Max Reger, he developed his own musical language, one which was harmonically bold even though strongly based on tonality and conservative in many respects. He has been labeled the most "Germanic" composer after Wagner, and a reading of his published ideas on the esthetic aims of music suggests that he might have endorsed this categorizing since his philosophical viewpoint seems to derive from Wagner and Schopenhauer. Though Pfitzner did not enjoy the universal acclaim accorded to Strauss, he was unquestionably acknowledged as a composer of importance during his own time in his own world. (Among his works which received many performances in Europe: five operas, including the well-known "**Palestrina**", works for soloists, chorus and orchestra several symphonies and concertos, three string quartets and other chamber music, more than one hundred songs.) International recognition has been slow to come, and it is to be hoped that history will award Pfitzner the place he deserves as a significant composer during a time of transition in music.

His output for piano solo is small, consisting of a **Concerto, Opus 31, Five Piano Pieces, Opus 47** (premiered by Walter Gieseking) and the present **Six Studies, Opus 51**.

Like the etudes of Chopin, the Six Studies have the stature of well rounded concert pieces even though each deals with a specific technical or musical problem. The first is rich in hidden melodic lines which must be detected and emphasized in performance; the second and fourth pieces deal with technical problems; number three is an intricate melodic study of chromaticism, and number five exploits rhythmic ambiguity. The set concludes with a serene and tranquil trill study, a poetic vision rather than an etude.

—Helmut Brauss

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Although born and raised in England, Lennox Berkeley (b. 1903) took up the serious study of music in Paris as a pupil of the famed Nadia Boulanger. Thus the English academic and folksong traditions played a lesser part in his musical training than they did in the artistic formation of other British composers of his generation. As might be expected, then, his earlier works show affinities with other composers whose pens were scribbling the outlines of the future—Poulenc and Stravinsky, for example. But, like Brahms before him, Berkeley withdrew many of the efforts of his apprentice years, leaving principally the output of the years beginning 1939-1940, which saw the production of the **Serenade for Strings and the Symphony**. The latter is one of Berkeley's really important pieces, a demonstration of considerable lyrical expression and of an authentic musical personality. This increased lyricism is developed in subsequent works, in a number of effective works for voice and chorus, in other orchestral sets, and in chamber music. The **Trio for Horn, Violin and Piano, Opus 44**, copyrighted in 1956, is a composition of considerable power and pungency. It displays effective writing for all instruments, particularly the piano, and is a solid contribution to a literature heretofore dominated by the landmark E-flat trio of Brahms.

—Lawrence Fisher

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In March of 1897, Hugo Wolf set to music three of Robert-Tornow's translations of poems by Michelangelo. These were to be his last songs for in less than four months, Wolf suffered a complete mental breakdown never to recover. The poetry of Michelangelo has been set to music by a number of composers including Arcadelt, Britten, Dallapiccola and Strauss.

The first song "**Wahl denk' ich oft**" is a statement about Michelangelo's past and present life: "I often ponder on the life behind me, careless I live . . . what mortal then did think of me or mind me . . . now I'm loved and love, the people know me!" "**Alles endet, was entstehet**", finds Michelangelo in a fatalistic mood concerned with the unavoidability of death: "All Creation once must perish, friends, relations, all we cherish . . . We must pay to Death his due, all the hope our bosom nourished, all we lived for, loved and cherish, all Creation once must perish." It is not until the closing line of "**Fühlt meine Seele**" that one realizes this to be a love song: "Oh, does my spirit feel the long sought light of God who gave me life? It is other spheres that shed their glory o'er this vale of tears and now delight my heart with memories bright? Is it a voice, a dream or spell, that haunts the soul and fills mine eyes with tears, my trembling heart with aching fears that never before it knew? All that I long for, weep for as mine own . . . I ask a yea or nay with heart despairing, and I must, mistress, blame thy glorious eyes."

—Alan Ord